Test Anxiety Workshop

Presented by Student Support Services

Pitt Community College
Test Anxiety is a learned behavior

So…. It can be UNLEARNED!
Three reasons behind test anxiety

- Lack of preparation
- Fear of failure
- Past experiences
Dealing with lack of preparation

• Know about the test. (Ask your instructor how to best prepare.)
• Do practice tests.
• Avoid “cramming”. Never “group cram” immediately prior to the test.
Dealing with lack of preparation cont.

• It is YOUR responsibility to prepare!

• Once you have adequately prepared for the test and genuinely know the material,

• RELAX!!!
Dealing with fear of failure

- You need to believe you will succeed.
- In order to believe this, you will need to change your way of thinking.
- This can be accomplished with positive self-talk.
Practice Positive Thinking

• Verbalize your worries and write them down.

• Quickly, contradict these statements. Positive self-talk enables you to feel that you are in control.
Examples

• Worry: “I’ll probably fail because this teacher’s tests are always impossible.”

• Contradiction: “I have studied for this test and I know the material. I will do my best.”
Practice:

• Worry: “I always get test anxiety and become paralyzed during a test.”

• Contradiction:
  ________________________________
  ________________________________
Practice continued:

• Worry: “If I’m lucky, I’ll pass the test.”

• Contradiction:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Dealing with fear of failure cont.

- Practice affirming yourself. (Don’t get discouraged if your test anxiety doesn’t improve right away; overcoming test anxiety is a process.)

- Visualize yourself taking tests successfully.
Dealing with Past Experiences

- Write down what you have experienced in the past while taking tests.

- (Include everything: physical, emotional, etc.)
Dealing with Past Experiences cont.

• Now go back and think about each item you wrote down. What are ways in which each anxiety might be eliminated (or reduced)?

• (For example: looking around the room could be reduced by concentrating on your own paper.)
RELAX!

• Practice deep breathing and relaxation exercises. Then “rehearse” taking the test.
• Close your eyes (not until you’ve read all the steps!)
• Inhale and exhale 10 times.
• Breathe through your nose and fill your lungs.
• Hold your breath and slowly count to 5.
• Breathe out slowly and easily through your mouth.
• Concentrate on breathing and think of nothing else.
Other Practical Suggestions

• 1. Manage your daily routine the day of the test.
• 2. Get enough sleep the night before the test.
• 3. Dress in clothes that make you feel confident.
• 4. Arrive early for the test.
• 5. Have all the supplies that you need.
Other Practical Suggestions Continued

• 6. Pay close attention to the test directions. Resist the urge to ignore the instructor just because you are in a hurry to get started on the test.
• 7. Get totally involved in answering the items.
• 8. Budget your time.
• 9. Read all questions before answering them.
Other Practical Suggestions Continued

- 10. Review the test after you are finished.
- 11. Be POSITIVE!
- 12. Have reasonable expectations.
- 13. When anxiety surfaces, don’t panic. Practice your deep breathing or other techniques that work for you.
- 14. Remember that many other students are likely experiencing the same feelings.
Don’t get discouraged!

• Remember that overcoming test anxiety takes time and practice. Reward yourself for even small victories, and keep practicing!